

grateful that students and residents from western Wisconsin remain committed to improving the local environment for the benefit of this generation and the many generations to follow. It is my sincere hope that we can here in Congress take this example back to our own communities to strengthen our own constituents' efforts to raise awareness regarding local environmental issues.

Obviously, the teaching going on at Longfellow Middle School is near and dear to my heart. Growing up, I spent a lot of time along the Mississippi River. Now I live right on the Mississippi, and take my two sons down to the River to fish, or just explore, whenever possible. The important role the Mississippi River plays in the lives of my constituents is, in fact, why I helped form the bipartisan Mississippi River Caucus as one of the first things I did when joining Congress. I also continually support initiatives to benefit the river such as the EMP program and the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge. And this year, I will reintroduce my Upper Mississippi River Basin Conservation Act.

On behalf of the residents of western Wisconsin, I proudly commend Debra Buswell on her recognition as an Outstanding Environmental Educator. I also commend the School on the River for being recognized for its efforts to improve the local environment in western Wisconsin. The La Crosse School District and local community are better places to live thanks to the efforts of these middle-school students and their dedicated teacher.

IN HONOR OF RICHARD
KWASNESKI, MAYOR OF LEMONT,
IL

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Richard Kwasneski, who in just a few weeks will be retiring as Mayor of Lemont, Illinois, which is located in my congressional district.

Our local governments could not work if it were not for people like Rick—they serve their hometowns for no other reason than because they love where they live.

Rick Kwasneski surely loves Lemont. For the past 16 years, Rick has served the people of Lemont with dedication and honor, first as a Village Trustee for eight years and then as Mayor for the past eight.

As Mayor, Rick led the economic and physical revitalization of Lemont's historic downtown area, created a Historic District in the downtown area to promote and preserve the rich history of Lemont, and reconstructed the town's aging infrastructure and roadways. He also lowered the Village's property tax rate to its lowest level in 25 years.

Rick is a tireless champion for Lemont, always working to improve the Village wherever there is a need. The residents of Lemont were lucky to have him as Mayor and I know he will be missed.

I am going to miss Rick as well. Since I came to Congress a little over two years ago, Rick has been a valuable partner on issues important to Lemont, such as the southern extension of I-355 and extra train service on the Heritage Corridor rail line that serves Lemont.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by saying that we need more excellent individuals like Rick Kwasneski to go into public service. His selfless hard work and advocacy for Lemont are a model for all of us.

And even though he will no longer serve as Mayor of Lemont, I know that he will continue to have a strong presence in the community, lending a hand whenever and wherever it is needed.

FEBRUARY 22 FOREST ROUNDTABLE IN MISSOULA

HON. DENNIS REHBERG

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, on February 22 I sponsored a roundtable discussion in Missoula, Montana on forest health issues. This discussion included presentations from a wide array of interests.

Representing the conservation community were Tom France of the National Wildlife Federation, Cesar Hernandez of the Montana Wilderness Association and Steve Thompson of the Montana Conservation Voters. Forest products industry witnesses were Kim Liles of the Pulp and Paperworkers Resource Council, Jim Hurst of Owens and Hurst Lumber, Sherm Anderson of the Montana Logging Association and Roger Johnson of Pyramid Mountain Lumber. County governments were represented by Commissioners Barbara Evans of Missoula County, Alan Thompson of Ravalli County, Dale Williams of Flathead County and Rita Windham of Lincoln County. Providing creative ideas practiced on non-federal lands were Garry Orr of the Salish-Kootenai Tribes and Tom Schultz with the Montana Department of State Lands. Finally, the scientific and academic communities were represented by Drs. Chuck Keegan and Carl Fiedler of the University of Montana and U.S. Forest Service fire ecologist Steve Arno.

This roundtable, and one scheduled for April 18 in Hamilton, will provide me with firsthand accounts of what is working and not working regarding management of Montana's forests. As a member of both the House Committees on Agriculture and Resources, that have jurisdiction over forest management, I am seeking "made in Montana" solutions to our current challenges in forest management.

I encourage my colleagues to read the following article by Sherry Devlin on the Missoula roundtable that appeared in the February 23 Missoulian. I also highly recommend reading the testimony of Kim Liles who is a papermaker for Smurfit-Stone Container in Frenchtown, Montana and a member of Hellgate Local 8-0885 PACE International Union.

[From the Missoulian (MT), Feb. 23, 2001]

REHBERG GETS EARFUL ON FORESTS
INDUSTRY OFFICIALS SAY CONTROL SHOULD
STAY WITH LOCAL EXPERTS

(By Sherry Devlin)

The rest of the country should just "butt out" and let Montanans manage the national forests in their back yards, a Eureka sawmill owner told U.S. Rep. Dennis Rehberg's forest-management roundtable Thursday.

"I'm not going to tell the people of New York City how to manage Central Park,"

said Jim Hurst, owner of Owens and Hurst Lumber Co. "So why should they be telling us how to manage the Kootenai National Forest? I say they should butt out."

Montanans, Hurst said, can work their way through even the thorniest forest-management issues. It's the national dictates—of presidents, congressmen and bureaucrats—that make people dig in their heels.

So went the conversation during a four-hour, four-panel series of roundtable discussions at the University of Montana, called by Rehberg—he said—to learn more about forest-management issues and to look for common ground. "Is there anything that we can all agree on?" he asked.

"Yes," said paper maker Kim Liles. "I share everyone's concern for the health, conservation and beauty of this great state. I most certainly do not want to destroy the environment."

"Yes," said environmental lawyer Tom France. "If it's not just a rush to get timber off the hill, but a rush to do right by the land."

"Good," said Rehberg, the Republican elected in November to Montana's single seat in the House of Representatives. "People have this preconceived notion that I have a preconceived notion about forest management. And I don't. I am serious about the consensus process."

Collaboration can work; it can yield timber cutting and endangered-species recovery, said France, an attorney for the National Wildlife Federation in Missoula.

Loggers and environmentalists have been able to look at specific pieces of land and agree upon "appropriate timber harvest" that "lays lightly on the land," he said. "It works best when we are discussing specific tracts of land in our own, local area."

"Let's start talking about salvage logging in burned areas and restoration projects in the urban-wildland interface," said Anne Dahl of the Swan Ecosystem Center. "We are very capable of making good decisions as a community."

"We need to start over and practice sustainable forestry on the millions and millions of acres of forest land that we already roaded and developed," said Steve Thompson, a Whitefish consultant, writer and environmental activist.

Don't get distracted, Thompson advised, by focusing your energy on a repeal of President Clinton's roadless initiative—the last administration's controversial ban on road building and logging on 58 million acres of undeveloped national forest land.

"Many of the forest issues that we face are very polarized, very difficult," France said. "They are not easily resolved by even powerful congressmen in Washington, D.C. I encourage you to focus on the places where we can actually make progress on the ground."

Loggers—who sat with Rehberg on another of the roundtable panels—emphasized that there will be no consensus unless the discussion and decisions are local.

"To manage our national forests from an office back East is unacceptable," said Liles, who works at Smurfit-Stone Container Corp.'s Frenchtown linerboard plant. "The national folks don't have to experience the economic devastation their policies cause. They don't know us or our geography. We have very good people right here in Missoula, Montana, in the Forest Service. We need to allow them to do their jobs."

Hurst told Rehberg that federal land management policies have bankrupted his community and broken its spirit. "Eureka, Montana, is going broke," he said. Earlier this month, he laid off 40 percent of his employees.

Local management works, Hurst said. "Look at Alberta, the most prosperous piece